



Arizona Registrar of Contractors

Message from Israel G. Torres, Director

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April 2005

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Building Blocks Awards recognize community service in Arizona's contracting industry

The ROC's Industry Advisory Council (IAC) has established a unique program to showcase the countless hours and financial contributions contractors invest in our communities statewide. The second Annual Building Blocks of the Community Awards & Banquet will be held in August, and I encourage all licensed contractors to consider submitting nominations for charitable projects they've done in the past year.

The IAC, which represents about 30 contractor-related associations across the state, established these awards to recognize the positive impact contractors make by raising funds for charitable causes, or contributing time, labor and materials to Arizonans in need.

The Building Blocks of the Community Awards program is the first of its kind and has served as a national model for other states. We launched this program last year and were overwhelmed by the participation and support it received from the contracting industry. More than 450 people from all trades attended, and we recognized 10 recipients in the categories of general contractor, subcontractor, contractor association and corporate associate for the generous work they do to serve their communities.

Last year's award recipients were honored for community service projects that included support to the Boy Scouts of America, rebuilding a food bank for St. Vincent de Paul, building and donating a home to Habitat for Humanity, renovating a women's and children's shelter, building an emergency access road for Sunshine Acres Children's Home, donating funds to a vocational high school, installing a new outdoor lighting system for the American Red Cross, and donating funds to various non-profit agencies.

The IAC will name the 2005 Building Blocks of the Community recipients at a banquet Saturday, August 20 at The Wigwam Resort & Golf Club in Litchfield Park. Award nominations will be accepted through Friday, May 31, 2005 and may be mailed to the Arizona Registrar of Contractors, ATTN: Building Blocks Awards, 800 W. Washington St., Sixth Floor, Phoenix, AZ 85007. Nomination forms are available through the ROC's website, www.azroc.gov, or by calling 602-542-1525 ext. 7115.

For a second year, the Associated Minority Contractors of America-Phoenix Chapter will serve as the premier sponsor of the event. Other sponsors include American Subcontractors Association of Arizona, American Builder Magazine and Builders' Book Depot. For more information about the awards or attending the event on August 20, contact the ROC at 602-542-1525 ext. 7115.

Thanks to every contractor in our state who gives back to his or her community - you are truly helping to move Arizona forward!

Israel G. Torres, Director

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Investigations Update

Scam Alert: Tucson unlicensed contractor scams multiple homeowners

4-8-05: The ROC has received multiple complaints regarding the unlicensed activity of Raul Green, doing business as Vista De Desierto Construction, in the Tucson area. Green contracts with homeowners to perform masonry and/or landscaping work and often abandons the projects prior to completion of the work. Consumers in Pima County should take extra precautions if contacted by Green to perform any contracting work at their residences, and should report him to the ROC immediately at 1-888-271-9286.



Unlicensed contractors caught in Bullhead City sting operations

Last month, the ROC conducted an undercover unlicensed contractor sting operation in Bullhead City. Investigators targeted individuals advertising their construction services to the public without the proper license required. During the course of a sting, ROC investigators posing as homeowners meet with these individuals and describe the type of work that needs to be done, almost always resulting in an illegal offer of contracting services from the unlicensed person. As a result of the sting, the ROC found 17 cases of unlicensed contracting and 11 advertising violations. In conjunction with these cases, investigators issued eight criminal citations and seven civil citations.

Protect yourself against unlicensed contracting scams!

To report possible fraudulent home improvement activities or if you have been approached door-to-door by someone claiming to be a contractor, contact the ROC at 602-542-1525 or toll-free outside Maricopa County at 888-271-9286, or visit www.azroc.gov.

Legislative Update



"Handyman bill" defeated...BUT alive again.

After being defeated on March 30 in the State Senate, the "handyman bill" was reintroduced this week in the House of Representatives in the form of a striker, which allows for the bill to be fast-tracked through the law-making process.

The new bill, SB 1305, mirrors the previous version with a possible increase in the dollar threshold to \$2,000, excluding material. The ROC has typically opposed increases to the "handyman" licensing exemption because of the adverse impact on consumers and legitimate licensed contractors.

The current bill doubles the financial risk for consumers should something go wrong or if they receive substandard work. Additionally, excluding material from the dollar threshold creates an unlimited amount of financial risk to homeowners if they purchase all the material themselves and pay the unlicensed individual or company up to \$2,000 in labor.

Increasing the dollar amount under which individuals or companies can operate as a contractor without having the appropriate training or license, opens the door to additional fraudulent activity by unscrupulous individuals preying upon unsuspecting consumers and the elderly. In addition, these lawbreakers undercut legitimate licensed contractors who pay taxes, carry insurance and play by the rules.

The ROC will continue to oppose this bill as the session winds down. If you have questions about legislation that might impact your business, please contact the agency at 602-542-1525 or toll-free statewide outside Maricopa County at 1-888-271-9286.

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Learn how to protect yourself from scams at the May 18 Neighborhood Ambassador Academy

Home repairs and remodeling projects are challenging even when they go smoothly, but can become distressing when unlicensed contractors take advantage of homeowners. To alert consumers to the dangers of hiring an unlicensed contractor, the ROC offers the Neighborhood Ambassador Academy, providing both training and education in an attempt to stop these scams before they start.



ROC Director Israel Torres speaks with neighborhood leaders about how to protect themselves from unlicensed contracting scams at the quarterly Neighborhood Ambassador Academy.

Participants in this free program will receive hands-on experience and education on issues concerning unlicensed contractors, scams, and enforcement methods such as neighborhood sweeps and stings.

Neighborhood Ambassadors also are the first to receive email alerts of fraudulent activities in their neighborhoods.

The ROC's next Neighborhood Ambassador Academy is scheduled for 6-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 18, at the Phoenix ROC office, 800 W. Washington St. To learn more or to register, contact the ROC at 602-542-1525 ext. 7115, or toll-free statewide outside Maricopa County at 888-271-9286, ext. 7115.

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Project Cool Aid kicks off efforts to help families in need beat the heat

Summer is right around the corner, which means those unbearable temperatures are not far behind. Home cooling systems working tirelessly to fend off the heat and unfortunately, not everyone can afford to fix their cooling system when it breaks down.

Check the company's license status and report the company to the agency if you suspect a scam.

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With this in mind, for the third consecutive year, the ROC and the Air Conditioning Contractors of America/Arizona are kicking off Project Cool Aid to help Valley families beat the desert heat with free home cooling system repairs. To apply for Project Cool Aid, homeowners can submit statements of need from April 13-20, to the Arizona Registrar of Contractors, ATTN: Project Cool Aid, 800 W. Washington St., sixth floor, Phoenix, AZ, 85007, or via e-mail at projectcoolaid@azroc.gov. In order to submit a letter you must be a Maricopa County homeowner and own your single-family home.



- Homeowner's name, address and telephone number
- Description of cooling system needs
- Number and description of family members
- Special circumstances which may include health and disability issues and financial concerns

To learn more about the program, call 602-542-1525, ext. 7115.

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ASU welcomes Tribal members, contractors to national conference

There is still time to register for the 2nd annual Construction in Indian Country National Conference, set for May 5-6, 2005, presented by the Del E. Webb School of Construction and the Office of Indian Affairs at Arizona State University. The conference aims to educate members of the construction industry about the realities and opportunities concerning construction in Indian Country, while helping to create beneficial relationships between Tribes and non-Indian contractors.

The conference will be held at the Phoenix Sheraton Crescent Hotel. To register or for additional information, visit <http://construction.asu.edu/busdev/cic/cic.htm>, or contact Mary Lue Peck by email at marylue.peck@asu.edu or by telephone at 480-965-0107.

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